

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Attached hereto is(are) three (3) sheet(s) of corrected drawings that comply with the provisions of 37 C.F.R. § 1.84. The corrected drawings incorporate the following drawing changes:

The legend "Conventional Art" has been added to Figures 17-21.

It is respectfully requested that the corrected drawings be approved and made a part of the record of the above-identified application.

REMARKS

Claims 1-21 are pending in this application. Claims 2 and 18 have been canceled.

The Office Action dated February 23, 2005, has been received and carefully reviewed. As a result of that Office Action, claims 1, 2, 5-10, 16 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by conventional art discussed in the background section of the present application. It was indicated in the Office Action, however, that claims 3, 4, 11-15 and 18-21 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but would be allowable if amended to include the limitations of their base claims.

It is noted that claims 19, 20 and 21 are independent claims. These claims are already in independent form, and were not rejected in the Office Action. It therefore appears that claims 19-21 are in condition for allowance without amendment. The limitation of claim 18 has been added to claim 16; therefore, claim 16 and its dependent claim 17 are believed to be allowable. Finally, the limitations of claim 2 have been added to claim 1. Claim 1 and its dependent claims 3-15 are believed to be allowable for the reasons provided below.

INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENTS

As an initial matter, it is noted that information disclosure statements were filed in this application on February 21, 2002,

August 19, 2002, and on May 5, 2004. Initialed copies of the forms PTO-1449 submitted with these IDS's were not attached to the February 23, 2005, Office Action. It is respectfully requested that the examiner provide initialed copies of these forms with the next communication to show that the references listed thereon were considered.

DRAWINGS

It is noted that drawing Figures 17-21 illustrate conventional art. The legend "Conventional Art" has therefore been added to these drawings.

PRIORITY DOCUMENTS

The Office Action acknowledges a priority claim but advises that certified copies of the priority documents have not been received from the International Bureau in this PCT national stage application. It is respectfully submitted that copies of the priority documents were timely filed during the international phase and should have been sent to the PTO by the International Bureau. Indeed, the June 4, 2002, Notification of Missing Requirements indicates that at least one priority document was received by the PTO. As provided in MPEP 1896 (III), "if a copy of the foreign priority document is not in the national stage application file but applicant asserts that a certified copy of the priority document

was timely furnished under PCT Rule 17 in the international phase, then the examiner should consult with a Special Program Examiner in his or her Technology Center." In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that Applicant has taken all necessary steps to perfect the priority claim.

SUBSTANTIVE REJECTIONS

Claim 1 and 2 were both rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being anticipated by the art discussed at pages 1-4 of the present specification. By the above amendment, the limitations of claim 2 have been added to claim 1. Amended claim 1 and its dependent claims 3-15 are submitted to be allowable over the conventional art discussed in the specification for the following reasons.

Claim 1 as amended requires a twin drum continuous casting apparatus for casting a metal sheet that includes a cooling drum formed from and divided into a pair of shaft members having the shaft portions provided integrally therewith and being joined to end portions of the drum sleeve, and a core member located between the shaft members and shrink fitted to an inner peripheral surface of the drum sleeve without contacting the shaft members. With reference to the conventional device of Figure 21, drum 11 includes a core member 11 that is between shaft members 11a and in contact with the shaft portions. This is not an optimal arrangement of elements for the reasons provided in the specification. Claim 1

requires that the core member not contact the shaft members. This feature is not shown or suggested by the art of record, and claim 1 as amended is submitted to be allowable over the art of record.

Claims 3-15 depend from claim 1 and are submitted to be allowable for the same reasons as claim 1.

Conclusion

Each issue raised in the Office Action dated February 23, 2005, has been addressed and it is believed that claims 1, 3-17 and 19-21 are in condition for allowance. Wherefore, reconsideration and allowance of these claims is earnestly solicited.


Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Scott Wakeman (Reg. No. 37,750) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.


If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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By


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